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Ayurvedic System

1918

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The Ayurvedic System

OFFICE OF THE ... MADRAS
27 JAN 1919

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7, Ayalur Muthiah Mudaly Street,
Mint Post, Madras.

MADRAS:
THOMPSON AND CO.
1918.

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THE AYURVEDIC SYSTEM.

IN this small pamphlet we desire to place on record the invaluable services of the system of Ayurveda long handed down to the sons of Aryavartha from the great seers and sages of the land such as Atreya, Kasyapu, Bhrigu, Agastya, Gauthama, Bharadvaja, Maitreya and others to the cause of human suffering. For one reason or the other the system has fallen into disuse as all other arts and sciences of the ancient Hindus have fallen. The mere fact of disuse or the neglected condition of the potent Ayurveda at the present moment cannot be mistaken for its dearth of healing powers or the void of the fundamental principles on which the system was built by the experiences of the highest potentates of the system whose sole ambition in life was to allay human suffering as even the great Kapila of the Sankhya system of philosophy starts with the three kinds of human ills namely, Adibhouthic, Adidaivic and Adyathmic. This first evidently comes under the category of diseases and epidemics of the body as cures of them. The learned Kapila suggests the system of medicines which Charaka, Sushrutha, Vokbhata and a number of other organised schools do recommend. Such a system of highest traditional antecedents of long healing effects, tried and experimented in this ancient land of Aryavartha, could not be allowed to drop out or be forgotten for want of adequate appreciation by the Government who happen to have no suitable means of

understanding its value. We propose to draw the attention of the Government to view the question with somewhat more foresight and at least with some amount of sympathy as they are the inheritors of the great Roman and Tuetonic civilization whose motto it was to follow truth wherever found. The time has now approached for the Government to take a definite attitude and we impress on them that, as the race of lovers of arts and sciences, they should extend their hand of support to the resusciation, growth and usefulness of the ancient system of medicine to the suffering humanity.

The present system of English doctoring has developed no doubt in medicine and surgery, in the discovery of surgical instruments and in enlarging the list of drugs. Their scientific methods of diagnosis, treatment, dietary, and the development of a number of auxiliary sciences, as Chemistry, Physiology, Anatomy, Embryology, Pathology, etc., has been so consistent, so definite and so much relied upon that it is rather difficult to convince the modern medical man of the excellences of the old system of Ayurveda which apparently seems to them unscientific, indefinite and often contradictory in diagnosis, treatment and diet.

We believe that the Government will be committing themselves to a serious blunder should they ever rely on this estimation of the ancient Ayurvedic system. The modern medical opinion, in generality of the cases on the ancient system as unscientific is not true. No doubt, the unpretentious and simple savant of the Ayurvedic system cannot boast of the fashionable show, sometimes cumbrous and costly paraphernalia of the modern English system; but we should like to make

clear to the Government that no system could be valued on the fancy-glitter or the cumbrous machinery. It is no reflection on any system of medicine because we believe that every system has its own merits. Where medicines are prepared through a series of long process by the employment of modern appliances such as machinery, test tubes and the long weary experiments. Where a number of separate manufactories should co-operate with the doctor in the process of purveying certain medicines to cure human ills, a simple method of diagnosis by testing the pulse, administering of medicines prepared then and there and even from nature saves a good deal of trouble, gains effect in curing the disease as having powerful medical effects owing to their direct purveying from nature. Like many doctors and men of science of the modern times, the native doctors are not in the habit of scientific research, scientific explanation of the diseases, explanations with reference to the effect of the medicine in the scientific language and the modern vocabullary; but there is every proof of re-search and experiment of the innumerable drugs, herbs and roots by the ancient seers and those experiences of the ancient physicians like Charaka, Sustrutha and Vokbhatta, etc., recorded as they are, form the basis for the practice of the innumerable train of doctors of Ayurveda. The native doctors believe in the ancient records produced after elaborate research and experiment, have found them efficacious in curing diseases under certain administering of certain doses of medicine and the people equally cling to the same system of medicine in spite of other systems. If the modern scientist and scholar in

medical research wants proof of the effects of medicines in the Ayurveda, he must satisfy himself by embarking upon a fresh inquiry rather than allow himself in the ways of the vulgar by discrediting the system itself. Such an elaborate enquiry should be conducted by the Government and the large body of patrons in India who role in wealth. We do not believe in the statement that the Ayurvedic system is unscientific but we should be willing to consent that it is unexplored and untried. That is the reason why we insist on the Government to direct more attention to the subject.

The system is capable of breeding an army of quacks. This is another criticism on the Ayurvedic system by some who are in favour of the English system. No doubt there is much scope for quacks in the Ayurvedic system in the absence of a standard or measurement of medical knowledge. The prevalence of quackary is not the monopoly of Ayurveda alone as there are medical doctors of half and quarter knowledge even in the English or any other system of medicine. The fact that the system helps quacks must be sufficient reason for the Government to reform the science rather than think of neglecting it.

It is one of the strong points of Allopathy that surgery is their speciality and the entire absence of the same in the Hindu system of medicine mars the completeness of the science. This criticism on Ayurveda is equally baseless. This point has been proved by Kaviraj Jaminibhushan Roy, Kaviratna, M.A., & M.B., in the small pamphlet which forms the subject-matter of his Presidental address in the All-India Ayurvedic Conference in 1915. As all other sciences "even the

science of surgery had its birth in India" says the learned Kaviratna. Dr. A. F. R. Hoernle, M.A., Ph. D., C.I.E., Dr. Max Neuburgher, Dr. Oslar and Macrae along with many English and European doctors bear testimony to the ancient character of Ayurveda. From India to Arabia, from Arbia to Egypt and Greece and thence to Rome and to all parts of Europe spread the knowledge of Ayurveda of the olden times. The history of European medicine does bear ample evidence to the same fact. The Ayurvedic system is divided into eight parts the first dealing with *Salya* or surgery. The first subject dealt with by Susrutha is surgery and midwifery. The latter mentions in his works the various methods of operations and the use of the variety of surgical instruments. Specialization in surgical operations, such as the eye, also mentioned by the same learned author. It is not true to maintain that surgery did not exist in India. On the other hand it is true to say on the authority of history that surgical knowledge was spread to other countries by the Hindus. It is still not far from truth to hold that no use was made of the knowledge in India; and the followers of the profession did not receive suitable support from the state and the patrons of knowledge during later times.

Diseases which are incurable by any other method than by an operation are promised cure by the administering of doses of medicine. This statement cannot be credited with sense by any man educated in the modern sense. The idea seems surprising should any one uphold such theories of cure. The method and the latest results of experiments of the western system of medicine rebel against, at least cannot consider it to be

consistent with the prevailing idea of, the science of medicine. The answer to this surprise is easy enough but one to be left to the belief and confidence that one places in the Ayurvedic method. There is much faith in the populace in the healing powers of herbs and roots which knowledge is associated with the highest spiritual foresight. It has not been unfamiliar to any of us what the claims of the mental healers of India and the Christian Science mental cures of the west are. The art of healing in India has been developed as a science; every factor which contributes to the alleviation of pain has been explored from physical, psychic, and dietary adjustment. It is no use shutting one's eye to the enormous possibilities and hidden mental and material forces of nature. All knowledge cannot be measured by the standards or methods that the medical science in the west employs. The outlook of such a science must extend and the potent results should draw their attention rather than leave them alone for the simple reason that these do not conform to their method. Cures are sometimes effected by medicines, sometimes by faith, sometimes by mere sight and oftentimes by despatching them to patients in distant parts of the country. Actual experience may supplement evidence to corroborate the statement. It is no wonder that Ayurveda claims cures by medicines where operations alone are held to be the final resort. The system of Ayurveda is connected with the spiritual system of the Aryans and it is rightly called one of the *Upa* Vedas. It may be inexplicable to the western method, yet true in practice in the matter of affording cure to the patients.

The Ayurvedic Doctors generally rely on the authorities of certain texts supposed to have been written by old-timed sages. The diagnosis, treatment, diet, and other limitations follow the direction of the texts of those ancient seers. The native doctor uses these sastraic couplets to make sure of his knowledge of certain symptoms and cures and often finds efficiency of his medicines or the right interpretation of the text assured by experiences at the cost of some lives. This criticism is general, equally applicable to all systems of medicine. It is equally possible to make mistakes in the definite scientific methods and many are the theories that are exploded to-day in spite of their extensive popularity at the time of their origin. The scientific method is no guarantee to correct solution as it often happens that the hypothesis is wrongly assumed. When the hypothesis is true, results often prove valid without the laborious process of method. It is not our intention to discredit the only way to definite scientific knowledge, but we make it clear that the reliance of the Ayurvedic Doctors on the medical treatises of the Ancients does not in the least share the odium of inaccuracy until inaccuracy is proved. Ignorance of a science cannot be construed as utter emptiness of its contents. Again the task is very heavy and the Government alone is the suitable agency to embark on such an enquiry and redeem the neglected science of Ayurveda.

We have already dealt with the question of the elaborate paraphernalia or the cumbrous additions to the Science of Medicine as practised by the western profession— no bottles, no test tubes, prescriptions,

surgical instruments, etc. Again and again we have to repeat the same answer that the Ayurvedic system boasts in being simple, direct and radical in effecting cures. It does not pride itself in the possession of show of a multitude of auxilliaries which it can, but it would not, in as much as cures are the but not for show.

Lastly, there is no standard by which to measure the medical knowledge of a native physician. Profound learning or repeating of verses hardly make a good practitioner as often as a good practitioner never keeps up to the sufficeintly high standard of knowledge. It is often difficult to make distinctions with regard to one doctor from the other. In the Allopathic system, the medical universities maintain a certain standard by conferring medical degrees. The popularity of the Ayurvedic doctor generally depends upon the number of patients he gets. This is the standard of measurement, as it is. It is not the correct test as chances may consign to a corner a very intelligent physician, while a quack may pass for a successful man. It is no doubt that a suitable standard has to be recognized by the Government to measure the value of medical knowledge of the savants. If this were to be the criticism levelled against the system that is, distinction of one doctor from the other, the Government more than any other agency, have the entire blame. The absence of such a standard or measure is a potent impediment to the further progress of the science of Ayurveda and in fact a great loss to the cause of the medical knowledge of the world.

On the other hand, we place before the Government and the public that for the following reasons the cause of Ayurveda must be protected from neglect. Our particular emphasis consists in the Government taking the lead in the matter of sympathising with the movement and affording suitable support to further the cause.

We have great faith in the possibilities of Ayurveda as a system of medicine to combat the human illness. The science of medicine of the Hindus bears highest connections with the Vedas. Many things which are only a matter for faith at one time or the other have proved to be things of experience. The invisible universe, hotly contested by arrant materialists of the former age, has been accepted to be facts by men like Professors Lodge and Meyers. Things which did constitute the subject of belief in the former days happen to ensoul the modern belief. The Aryan Sastras are the repository of such wonders often unacceptable or at least unrecognisable by the prevalent standards or methods of investigation. The Ayurveda has such intimate connections with the highest Hindu Sastras that it is likely that the modern science hardly finds similarities of conclusions in it. But to a people who are born and bred in Hinduism, who eat and drink in religion, the benefits of the system could not be unfamiliar. The sanction of the Sastras to its preservation acts like a command and the Government could not be indifferent to afford relief by their active support to the indigenous system. It is the glory of the British Government that they never interfere but help wherever possible the religious tenets and systems of the Hindus or Muhammadans.

The Ayurvedic system of medicine is complete in itself having the surgical and medical branches developed to their highest pitch. Specialisation has developed and in each disease a number of varieties and a variety of prescription to each of them are maintained. Nothing could be more surprising to find the process of evolution discovered by the ancients in the matter of treatment of the diseases. External uses of medicines, internal administering of medical cure without operations, radical but quick cures to chronic diseases of very obstinate nature, and the system of curing of all diseases by single medicines, grant of ashes, or cures by words or touch or even thoughts have been but different stages in the evolution of remedies having been simplified at each stage. Simplicity and radical cure and least expense are the motto of Ayurveda.

The tropical country, as it is, must rely on the indigenous system only. The multitudinous growth of plants and herbs, roots and leaves have been studied by the ancient as possessing certain effects and this secret knowledge has been transmitted to the later generations by rote. The same practice is followed even to-day. The seers have studied the effects of these herbs and plants with reference to time and place and this system is therefore most suitable to the country but the other systems are allien however much excellent they may be in other climates.

The vast population of India, very poor as they are, cannot depend upon the imported foreign medicines since they cost them very high. The poor labourer, the agriculturist, the petty trader and the middle-class people prefer being less drained than it would be in the

case of the English cure. Where a simple remedy of a pice could answer it is rather folly to run to costly jokes of 1 to 5 Rs. per visit with medicine charges extra.

Many great doctors in the Ayurvedic system have found similarity of results by following certain prescriptions sanctioned by *Vaidya Sastra*. Similar experiences have taken place in all the other presidencies and similar results have been achieved during long periods of time and there is every guarantee that the whole science is based on truth rather than on the slippery ground as some may happen to suspect.

It is true to say that the system of Ayurveda is not built on sand. It is on the other hand true that the whole process is worked on the latest methods of physiology, anatomy, pathology, embryology, etc. The process is not before us but the results are there to be applied by any one who desires to get the promised results. It is the task of the Government to bridge the gulf and find out the process by offering their helping hand to the movement.

Of late, many educated Indians, High Court Judges, eminent lawyers, men of learning and successful English medical practitioners have realized the value of Ayurveda and they do not make any secret of their attachment to this method of treatment. Even doctors of eminence who are successful in the Western Science of medicine, find it to their advantage to practice or deal in native drugs with best results. The Ayurvedic system is backed up by an enormous

literature both in the Sanskrit and the Vernacular. The Charaka Samhitha, with equally valuable commentaries on it, is a very useful treatise. There are different schools or parties who rely on certain method of treatment alone. The physicians have developed a peculiar method of purifying the metals by a peculiar process of heating under a heavy pile of cow-dung cakes. The sastraic authorities describe the classification of diseases, the virtues of the herbs, the proportion of mixtures, the methods of powering, boiling or extracting, the prescriptions, the symptoms, diet and timings; all these are recorded. The astrological coincidences are warned to the practioner's notice.

Many diseases, such as Asthma, Consumption, Leprosy, Diabetes, Skin-diseases, Fevers, &c., &c., chronic and abstinate, are cured and there are records to the same effect.

For these reasons and many others which space forbids here to elaborate, we draw the attention of the Government that they may take active steps towards the improvement of the Ayurvedic system. We believe by such policy that the country will be free from the most inhuman ravages of countless diseases and such decrease in the human suffering and misery will lead to the better condition and happier state of the people at large who are now to a great extent helpless for want of adequate medical aid. Many professional medical people of Ayurvedic system who are not coming to the front for the absence of such state-support and public recognition shall take their place and fill the country with abundant medical aid. The state will evidently inspire a keen interest in the people and thus further

the cause of the vanishing science and would greatly help the cause of scientific research in medicine. Greatest discoveries are yet in store for the world should the Government make up their mind to support the movement as much as it needs, support it especially at this stage of progress. Indirectly the Government will be adding to the list of good causes by their help by the expansion of the Ayurvedic system; that means the Aryan knowledge in effect.

Hindu sastras proclaim the four ends of life. Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha, are the four fundamental human aspirations legitimately to be realised. Towards the achievement of the four ends of life the first consideration is the protection of the body. The other aspirations of life are possible only when the body keeps its balance and remains without sick. The modern conditions of life make the situation so complex that sickness in one way or the other pervade the human society in larger dimensions. The intermingling of the various nationalities in large towns and slums, the multifarious miseries eating the vitals of the poor populace breed a number of new diseases and epidemics unknown to the land and a large number of Ayurvedic doctors at a very low cost could be able to afford facilities to the suffering millions. We believe that the time is most suited to think of the problem. The Government have now face to face with the demon of strange epidemics and the percentage of such suffering increasing every year. The place also is most suited inasmuch as the system is born of the soil and there is no difficulty to propogate it in the soil. The recent debates in the Councils and

the passing of the Medical Registration Acts some time back in this province elicited the strong views of the country and the Government could not misread their strong protects. The attitude of the Government is rather indifferent, but it is our intention that they will realise the seriousness of the situation and the extreme need of the people who are indifferently cared after with medical aid. It is incumbent on the Government to sleep on more over this important question.

In conclusion we beg to summarise that the Ayurvedic system is the best for the reasons that we sketched as briefly as possible, though as scantily. We believe for the best of reasons, for the sake of the country, for the sake of the people, for the cause of science, for economy, for affording relief both curative and preventive, we appeal to the Government for their support and immediate action. The Hindu sastras whole-heartedly support it. Many able savants are ready to sacrifice to the cause and with Government support are willing to work out the future programme of Ayurveda. The Government could not be blind to the excellences of the system. They could not be misled into inaction for any reason of their, either to its being old, unused, cumbrous, un-understandable character or as to its metaphysical implications. The Government will themselves affer their helping hand to the movement under their direction and guidance. They must first begin by opening up new colleges, affording pecuniary help to the private undertakings, such as hospitals and shops, &c., extending as far as possible research methods and bringing the system in lines with the modern requirements.

The country shall be happy without diseases, with ample means of curative and preventive remedies, to the enormously increasing percentage of diseases. The highest ends of man will be realised by a sound body and it will amply reward the Government by adequate supply of man-power. It is the source of the highest benefits to the nation, social, economic, political and religious. The Government under no circumstances and under no pretext of reason or reasons, could shirk or be indifferent to this world-wide movement of Ayurveda.

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Thompson & Co., Printers, Madras.

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